



Good accountant keeps business fiscally fit

By DIANNA TROYER
For the Capital Press

MALTA, Idaho — An agricultural well driller in southeastern Idaho, Rich Scrivner, admits he is an accountant's nightmare, job security, and live entertainment with his sense of humor.

The 68-year-old Malta resident's bookkeeping system for his business starts with receipts.

"I threaten my employees and remind them to save them all," says Scrivner of receipts for parts, vehicle maintenance, food and other items.

Then he stuffs them in folders.

"When I get time, I'll organize and itemize them. If I get really behind, my accountant makes a house call. She tells me, 'Look, it's time to get it together here.'"

Scrivner says his long-time accountant, Dot Belveal in Nampa, is indispensable because she helps keep his business fiscally healthy and prepares his tax returns.

"Plus, she's patient and tolerates a client like me," says Scrivner, who heard about her through friends.

"She was a trap shooter and runs Chesapeake dogs, so I can relate to that. I'm not the type who would get along well with a shirt-and-tie kind of accountant."

Belveal, 58, says many of her clients are rejected by accounting firms.

"I get the ones no one else wants because they haven't filed a tax return for years for all kinds of personal reasons," says Belveal, who named her business Tax Solutions.

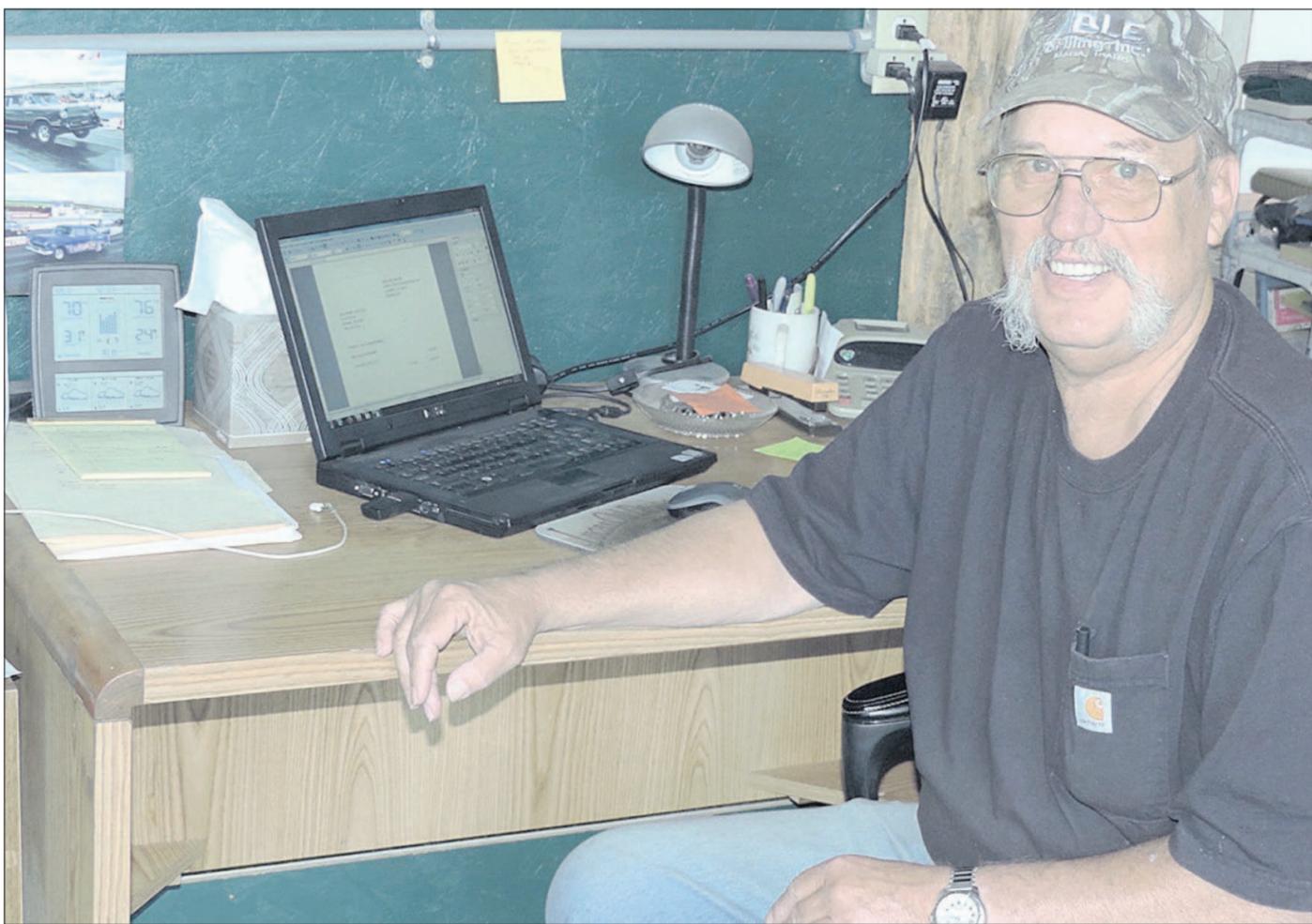
"They hand me a box filled with papers, and I make sense of it. Over the years, I've developed a good working relationship with the (Internal Revenue Service) office here in Boise and the state tax commission and have negotiated settlements on clients' reconstructed financials."

Scrivner says last year Belveal told him he almost made some money.

"I might have if I hadn't been racing," he says.

He drives his 1957 Chevy in the Super Stock division at quarter-mile drag races in Las Vegas, Seattle and Portland. The car advertises his business, Able Well Drilling, on the rear window.

"I wanted a name that was the beginning of the alphabet, so people who needed a well driller would see it first when they flipped open a phone book."



Dianna Troyer/For the Capital Press

Rich Scrivner says his accountant is vital for preparing his tax return.



Dianna Troyer/For the Capital Press
Rich Scrivner drag races his 1957 Chevrolet around the Northwest and Nevada during the off season from his well work.

Scrivner races in summer, his off-season from drilling wells.

"From mid-October to May, it's go, go, go. Farmers need the water in summer, so I do my drilling and maintenance during their down time."

While Scrivner says he does not take himself too seriously, he takes his work seriously.

"When I'm done with a job, I have a great sense of accomplishment. Like gold, silver or copper, water is a valuable commodity. Unlike metals, though, you can't live without it."

Scrivner advises irrigators to maintain their wells.

"It's a lot cheaper than drilling a new one."



Dianna Troyer/For the Capital Press

Rich uses huge bits and "swedges" to repair and drill irrigation wells throughout southeastern Idaho.

He relies on a camera to help diagnose problems.

"If you're not using a camera, you're making an educated guess about what's going on," he says.

To remove mineral build-

up, Scrivner uses a high-pressure pump that sprays 9 gallons of water a minute at 5,000 pounds of pressure per square inch.

"That jetter head can make a casing look new," he says.

The area's geology can be hard on a well, too. A fault line runs through part of the Raft River Valley. As the earth shifts, it often moves the well casing. To make the casing straight and round again, he inserts a "swedge" and applies pressure.

Scrivner says drilling wells has been a gratifying career for decades.

"Every job is different. You never know what you'll run into. I'm like most well drillers. The only way I'll quit is when I die on the back of a rig."

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